

142 [HUMAN KNOWLEDGE.] *Noscx*

So that themselves were first to *do'the* 111,
Ere they thereof, the *knowledge* could
attain ! Like him, that knew not
poison's power to kill, Until, by
tasting it, himself was slain.

Even so₅ by tasting of that fruit forbid,
Where they sought Knowledge, they did
Error find ! Ill they desired to know; and
111, they did ! And to give Passion eyes,
made Reason blind !

For then, their minds did first in Passion see,
Those wretched Shapes of Misery and Woe₅
Of Nakedness, of Shame, of Poverty, Which
then, their own experience made them know.

But then grew Reason dark, that she, no more,
Could the fair forms of Good and Truth
discern: Bats they became ' that eagles
were before ; And this they got by their
Desire to Learn !

But we₃ their wretched offspring! what
do we ? Do not we still taste of the
fruit forbid ? Whiles, with fond
fruitless curiosity, In books profane,
we seek for knowledge hid ?

What is this Knowledge ? but the sky-stolen
fire, For which the Thief still chained in
ice doth sit! And which the poor rude
Satyr did admire, And needs would kiss,
but burnt his lips with it!

What is it ? but the cloud of empty rain,
Which when JOVE's guest embraced, he
monsters got! Or the false pails, which oft
being filled with pain, Received the water,
but retained it not!

Shortly, what is it ? but the fiery Coach
Which the Youth sought, and sought his
death withal! Or the Boy's wings, which
when he did approach The sun's hot beams,
did melt, and let him fall!